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terrific in their denunciations, in little receptacles fixed high up in trees.

With the view of guarding thoughtless or reckless people against themselves there were certain classes enumerated who should not under any circumstances be allowed to take the oath, or to appear as witnesses. These were:—1. Those who do not believe in the merit of good works. 2. Such people as trade with the goods of others. 3. Parties interested in the case, as well as their relations, friends, and enemies. 4. Great talkers. 5. Sick persons. 6. Old men. 7. Children. 8. Overbearing men. 9. Public singers. 10. Actresses. 11. Women of ill fame. 12. Goldsmiths. 13. Painters. 14. Blacksmiths. 15. Cobblers. 16. Asthmatic persons. 17. Low people. 18. Gluttons. 19. Gamblers. 20. Hot-tempered people. 21. Doctors. 22. Thieves. 23. Pregnant women. 24. Hermaphrodites, a by no means uncommon class in Burma. If, however, both parties to the suit gave their consent, some of these classes might be allowed to give testimony. Another curious old provision was that when one of the litigants produced a witness, he himself was not required to take the oath, while contrariwise, if he swore on the book, it was not imperative that he should call witnesses. [143]

The Book of the Oath is not quite fixed in its length, nor in the number of the imprecations which it threatens against false witnesses. Some copies are much more diffuse than others. It is always written on palm-leaf, in the ordinary character, and these in English courts are kept wrapped up in the ecclesiastical kabbalwè, usually sewn for greater convenience. The commonest version is as follows:—

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I will speak the truth. If I should be influenced by the laws of demerits, namely, passion, folly, anger, false opinion, immodesty, pride, scepticism, hard-heartedness, then may all these calamities attend me and my relations, wherever we may be, by land or by water, travelling or remaining quietly at home. May the nats who guard the sacred heavens, the athura nats and all other giants, the nats who guard the three Baskets of the Sacred Law, delivered by the most excellent Buddha, and all the other holy writings and sermons; may the nats, the guardians of the sacred relics